

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-17

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJ: PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER' S ALLEGED MISTREATMENT
ON ARRIVAL AT MIAMI FOR OASGA

1. OAS AMBASSADOR PITTI COMPLAINED TO DEPARTMENT OFFICERS
DURING COURSE OF THE OASGA THAT FOREIGN MINISTER TACK
HAD, ONCE AGAIN, ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTIES UPON ENTER-
ING THE UNITED STATES.

2. FOLLOWING APPROPRIATE INVESTIGATION COUNTRY DIRECTOR
INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR AS FOLLOWS APRIL 18:

A. HAVING BEEN ADVISED BY DEPARTMENT ON APRIL 4 THAT
THE FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE ARRIVING APRIL 5, AND
THAT HE HAD LODGED A COMPLAINT CONCERNING TREATMENT
AT DULLES AIRPORT IN 197 O, BOTH U. S. CUSTOMS AND
IMMIGRATION SERVICE OFFICIALS WERE PREPARED TO EXTEND
TO HIM NOT ONLY THE USUAL CUSTOMS COURTESIES AND
FREE ENTRY PRIVILEGES BUT ALSO " SPECIAL TREATMENT",
AUTHORIZED BY THEIR HEADQUARTERS.

B. FOREIGN MINISTER DEBARKED AT MIAMI AIRPORT AT
12:46 PM, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE AND TWO OTHER PANA-
MANIAN OFFICIALS WITH RESPECT TO WHOM U. S. OFFICIALS
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WERE UNINFORMED (APARICIO AND O' DONNELL OF FOREIGN MINISTRY). A PAN AMERICAN ESCORT CONDUCTED THEM TO SPANISH- SPEAKING IMMIGRATION INSPECTOR FAGET. AS SPECIAL TREATMENT HAD NOT BEEN SOUGHT FOR APARICIO AND O' DONNELL, INSPECTOR FAGET HAD TO CHECK THE LOOKOUT BOOK. THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOOK OFFENSE, BUT THE INSPECTOR REFRAINED FROM COMMENTING.

C. AS NONE OF THE PARTY HAD COMPLETED THE I-94 FORMS, THE INSPECTOR HELPED THEM DO SO. HE IS NOT AWARE OF ANY OF THE FORMS BEING TORN UP, AS AMBASSADOR PITTI CLAIMED.

D. THE PARTY WAS THEN ESCORTED TO SUPERVISORY INSPECTOR OF CUSTOMS EAMES, WHO COLLECTED THEIR DECLARATIONS AND RELEASED THEIR LUGGAGE IMMEDIATELY.

E. THE PARTY DEPARTED FROM THE CUSTOMS AREA, WITH THEIR BAGGAGE, AT 12:57 PM -- ELEVEN MINUTES AFTER THEY DISEMBARKED FROM THE AIRCRAFT.

3. COUNTRY DIRECTOR COMMENTED TO PITTI THAT THAT HAD TO BE SOME SORT OF A RECORD, BUT ADDED THAT WE NEVERTHELESS REGRET WHATEVER INCONVENIENCE THE FOREIGN MINISTER MAY HAVE SENSED. PITTI REPLIED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER' S VERSION OF THE PROCEEDING WAS DIFFERENT. HE SAID TACK BELIEVES THE IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL " DELIBERATELY" DELAYED PARTY BY " LENGTHY CHECK" OF LOOKOUT BOOK, THEN BY " REPEATEDLY TEARING UP" I-94 FORMS THE PARTY FILLED OUT UNTIL THEY WERE COMPLETED TO HIS SATISFACTION. PITTI CONCLUDED HIS TESTY REMARKS BY SAYING HE WOULD TRANSMIT THE U. S. VERSION TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER-- WHOSE VERSION, ESPECIALLY THE " DELIBERATE DELAYING" PART, HE PERSONALLY BELIEVES.

ROGERS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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